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NEWS RELEASE

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Commissioner Gist Lauds Chariho Union, School Committee on Contract

Pleased with a new labor contract that emphasizes effective teacher practices, improved instruction, professional growth, and student and parent feedback to teachers, Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist has written a letter of support to the chair of the Chariho Regional School District Committee, the Chariho superintendent, and the president of NEA Chariho.

"I want to congratulate you, your fellow board members, and the members of NEA Chariho on the groundbreaking contract agreement between NEA Chariho and the Chariho Regional School District Committee," Commissioner Gist wrote to Holly Eaves, of the Chariho School Committee; Robert Mayne, of NEA Chariho; and Supt. Barry J. Ricci. "I understand that you reached this agreement after a public hearing to seek community input and after many hours of discussion about improving education in the Chariho schools."

Commissioner Gist offered particular praise for two new contract provisions: a call to develop a teacher-evaluation system in line with the Board of Regents standards on educator-evaluation systems and the implementation of a performance-based compensation in the next school year.

"I strongly believe in rigorous annual educator evaluations that emphasize student performance. Your agreement on this matter shows me that you share a strong commitment to school improvement," Commissioner Gist wrote.

Regarding performance-based compensation, Commissioner Gist noted: "I believe that educator salary options should be structured to promote improvements in student learning and to reward effective educators. I congratulate you on stepping forward to take on this challenge."

The Commissioner offered to help the union and school committee as they work to implement the contract provisions.

"I have said many times that the single most important factor in the education of our students is the effectiveness of the classroom teacher," Gist wrote. "Your new contract will help ensure that every Chariho student will have highly effective teachers."